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B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00
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	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01
	PM-02	PRS-01	P-01	SIL-00	SNP-00	SP-00	SR-00
	SS-00	STR-17	TRSE-00	T-01	RPE-00	/085W	

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O 091604Z DEC 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6079
USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9165
DOJ WASHDC
DIRFBI WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CARACAS 12866

STATE FOR ARA/AND
USIA FOR AR
JUSTICE FOR OIA

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, KJUS, VE
SUBJECT: [redacted] VIEW OF THE B1
CURRENT VENEZUELAN POLITICAL CLIMATE

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: A MUTUAL FRIEND INVITED PAO TO MEETING WITH
[redacted] B1

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[redacted] TO DISCUSS CURRENT POLITICAL B1
SITUATION. [redacted] EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN ABOUT B1
ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY THE GOV AND INDICATED THAT
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS ALREADY INQUIRING ABOUT ALLEGED
GOVERNMENT TORTURE OF INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION
WITH FAILED NOVEMBER 27 COUP ATTEMPT. [redacted] B1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 21 JUL 2006 200503206

ANDRES PEREZ (CAP) IS IN A TRIUMPHAL MOOD AND IS MISTAKENLY ATTACKING GOVERNMENT CRITICS THROUGH AN ANONYMOUS NEWSPAPER AD CAMPAIGN LINKING THE CRITICS WITH THE COUP ATTEMPT INSTEAD OF SEEKING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. HE BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE STILL DISSIDENT ELEMENTS IN THE ARMED FORCES WHO MIGHT BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN A MOVE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT IF CONDITIONS PERMITTED, THOUGH HE SEES NO SIGN OF ANOTHER IMMINENT COUP ATTEMPT. HE BELIEVES THAT THE MILITARY TRIALS FOR THE PERSONNEL ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE COUP ATTEMPT COULD CAUSE FURTHER UNREST IN THE MILITARY. [redacted] HAS RECEIVED DEATH THREATS AND WAS CONCERNED B1
ABOUT [redacted] B1
NO LISTED SPONSOR. HE PLANS TO MEET WITH MEDIA OWNERS TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES ON THIS ISSUE. WHEN ASKED WHAT CAP CAN DO TO CREATE STABILITY, [redacted] RECOMMENDED A SPEECH TO B1
THE NATION PREACHING RECONCILIATION AND SEEKING SUPPORT OF ALL DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS IN SOCIETY. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT CAP IS SO VULNERABLE ON CORRUPTION THAT HE NEEDS TO MOVE QUICKLY IN TAKING A TANGIBLE STEP TO SHOW THE PEOPLE HIS

COMMITMENT, SUCH AS HAVING CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST FOUR OR FIVE CORRUPT JUDGES. [redacted] RECENTLY SAW FEBRUARY 4 COUP B1
LEADER LT. COLONEL HUGO CHAVEZ AND REPORTS THAT HE WAS IN GOOD HEALTH AND THAT [redacted] HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE B1
DEGREE TO WHICH CHAVEZ MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE NOVEMBER 27 COUP ATTEMPT. [redacted] LIKE TO VISIT B1
WASHINGTON EARLY NEXT YEAR TO MEET WITH [redacted] B1
[redacted] TO DISCUSS COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

3. PAO WAS INVITED BY A MUTUAL FRIEND TO HAVE A DRINK ON DECEMBER 6 WITH [redacted] TO B1
DISCUSS THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION. [redacted] B1
[redacted] ALSO HAS AMBITIONS FOR HIGHER PUBLIC OFFICE AND HIS COMMENTS MUST ALWAYS BE UNDERSTOOD IN THIS CONTEXT. [redacted] HAD JUST VOTED IN HIS B1
DISTRICT AND REPORTED A VERY LIGHT TURNOUT. HE HAD HEARD REPORTS OF IRREGULARITIES SUCH AS POLLING PLACES NOT OPENING ON TIME, BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW WIDESPREAD THE PROBLEM WAS.

4. THE GOV AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES: [redacted] SAID THE B1

MAIN SUBJECT HE WANTED TO DISCUSS WAS HIS CONCERN THAT THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION WAS AUTHORIZING [redacted] B1 [redacted] OF PEOPLE ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH BEING INVOLVED IN THE NOVEMBER 27 COUP. IN ADDITION, UNDER THE PRETEXT OF SEEKING CIVILIANS INVOLVED IN THE ATTEMPT, CRITICS OF THE GOVERNMENT WERE BEING SUBJECTED TO HARASSMENT. [redacted] B1 HE HAS REQUESTED BUT HAD NOT YET RECEIVED FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE A LIST OF THE NAMES OF THOSE DETAINED, COMMENTS ON THEIR PHYSICAL CONDITION AND A LIST OF THE DETENTION CENTERS. HE HAD NOT SAID ANYTHING PUBLICLY PRIOR TO THE DECEMBER 6 ELECTION, BUT IF PROOF STARTS COMING IN, HE WILL HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING SOON. HE CONJECTURED THAT, IF THE ADMINISTRATION APPEARS TO BE

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SR-00 SS-00 STR-17 TRSE-00 T-01 RPE-00 /085W
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O 091604Z DEC 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6080
USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9166
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 CARACAS 12866

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CONDUCTING OR CONDONING PHYSICAL ABUSE OF MILITARY PRISONERS, THIS COULD FURTHER EXACERBATE THE MILITARY'S HOSTILITY TOWARD THE PEREZ REGIME. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE RECENTLY CONVENED MILITARY TRIAL COURTS, SAYING THAT IF THE COURTS ARE PERCEIVED TO

BE ACTING IN AN UNFAIR OR PRECIPITOUS MANNER, THIS WOULD UPSET THE MILITARY.

5. CAP: THE MAN AND HIS OUTLOOK: [redacted] B1
[redacted] HAS WORKED WITH AND OBSERVED CAP AT CLOSE RANGE OVER THE YEARS. HE DOES NOT HIDE HIS DISLIKE FOR THE MAN, BUT HE ALSO GIVES HIM CREDIT FOR BEING "THE SMARTEST POLITICIAN TODAY IN VENEZUELA." IN [redacted] CAP IS FEELING "TRIUMPHAL" OVER THE B1
NOVEMBER 27 RESULT AND IS ACTING AS IF THE LACK OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE COUP ATTEMPT INDICATED SUPPORT FOR HIM AND HIS POLICIES. IN RESPONDING TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS POSED [redacted] FINALLY CONCLUDED B1
THAT HE ISN'T SURE WHETHER IN HIS HEART CAP TRULY BELIEVES HE HAS WIDESPREAD POPULAR SUPPORT OR WHETHER THIS IS ESSENTIALLY HIS PUBLIC FACE IN ORDER TO CREATE CONFIDENCE AND STABILITY. [redacted] DESCRIBED CAP AS A MAN WHO CAN B1
SPEAK ON THE TELEPHONE WITH [redacted] OR GABRIEL GARCIA B1

MARQUEZ (I.E. WORLD-KNOWN FIGURES) BUT IS MORE AT HOME DEALING WITH SYCOPHANTS AND LOW-LIVES. TO ILLUSTRATE THE POINT ABOUT CAP'S PREFERENCE FOR BEING AROUND [redacted] B1
LIKES TO MAKE HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS AND IN THIS CASE HE LIKENED CAP TO HITLER IN THE SENSE THAT HITLER WAS A ROUGH, COMMON MAN WHO SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH PEOPLE WHO INFLATED HIS EGO AND EAGERLY DID HIS BIDDING. AS NO ONE

STOOD UP TO HITLER, SO NO ONE CAN STAND UP TO CAP AND ADVISE HIM OF THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS. (COMMENT: THE COMPARISON IS AMAZINGLY INAPPROPRIATE, AND A GOOD HINT OF HOW MUCH [redacted] REALLY DISLIKES CAP.) B1

6. MEETING WITH FEBRUARY 4 COUP LEADER LT. COL. HUGO CHAVEZ: [redacted] MENTIONED A RECENT MEETING WITH CHAVEZ. B1
HE SAID THAT CHAVEZ WAS IN GOOD HEALTH AND THAT CHAVEZ PROFESSED NO INVOLVEMENT IN THE NOVEMBER 27 COUP ATTEMPT. [redacted] THINKS THAT CHAVEZ WAS PROBABLY AWARE OF THE B1
PLANNED COUP BUT DID NOT LEND SUPPORT. HE SAID THAT HE ADMIRED CHAVEZ'S IDEALISM (WHILE CONDEMNING HIS ACTS) AND SAID THAT CHAVEZ SHOOK HIS HEAD IN SPEAKING ABOUT NOVEMBER 27 AND TOLD [redacted] THAT BOTH COUPS FAILED BECAUSE "WE B1
(MILITARY) DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS." [redacted] B1
LABELED CHAVEZ A MISGUIDED POLITICAL INNOCENT.

7. WHAT CAN CAP DO TO BRING ABOUT STABILITY: IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT CAP COULD/SHOULD DO TO BRING ABOUT INCREASED STABILITY [redacted] RESPONDED THAT HE B1
THOUGHT IT WAS VERY LATE IN THE GAME BUT THAT IN THE SHORT TERM CAP SHOULD DELIVER A SPEECH CALLING FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN LIGHT OF THE LATEST COUP ATTEMPT AND DECEMBER 6 ELECTIONS. HE SHOULD REACH OUT HIS HAND TO HIS WELL-KNOWN CRITICS AND REQUEST THEIR IDEAS AND SUPPORT. BY ALL MEANS, HE SHOULD NO LONGER [redacted] B1
[redacted] THAT IS BEING WAGED IN THE NEWSPAPERS AGAINST WRITER ARTURO USLAR PIETRI, EX-PRESIDENT RAFAEL CALDERA, JOURNALIST JOSE VICENTE RANGEL AND [redacted] HIMSELF. B1
SECONDLY, CAP IS MOST VULNERABLE ON THE CORRUPTION ISSUE AND TO REGAIN POPULAR CONFIDENCE HE SHOULD MAKE EXAMPLES

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OF FOUR OR FIVE CORRUPT JUDGES. THEY DON'T NEED TO BE THE MOST FAMOUS JUDGES, HE SAID, BUT SUFFICIENTLY KNOWN AND CHARGES SHOULD BE BROUGHT QUICKLY. AS A THIRD STEP, HE ADVOCATED THAT CAP TAKE ECONOMIC MEASURES (UNSPECIFIED) TO RESPOND TO THE DIRE NEEDS OF A GOOD-SIZED SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION. HE ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THE RECENT SUPREME COURT DECISION TO HEAR A CASE BROUGHT BY CAUSA R CONCERNING CAP'S ALLEGED MISAPPROPRIATION OF A DOLLARS 17 MILLION SECRET FUND SHORTLY AFTER HIS INAUGURATION IS PROBABLY A SHAM. THERE ARE FRIVOLOUS CHARGES IN THE SAME CASE SUCH AS CAP BEING CHARGED WITH TREASON FOR ALLOWING THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY (CANTV), AND IN [redacted] OPINION THESE FRIVOLOUS CHARGES WILL ENABLE THE COURT TO DISMISS THE ENTIRE CASE. [redacted] B1 B1

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8. DESIRE TO SPEAK TO [redacted] B1
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[redacted] MENTIONED THAT HE WAS RECENTLY IN THE U.S. (AT THE B1
TIME OF THE COUP ATTEMPT) ON A PERSONAL MATTER [redacted] B1
[redacted] AND THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO
CALL ON SOME HIGH-RANKING [redacted] OFFICIALS. B1
HE WOULD LIKE TO DO SO IN THE NEAR FUTURE, PARTICULARLY
[redacted] (HE IS LIKELY TO BE IN TOUCH ABOUT THIS EARLY B1
NEXT YEAR)

9. COMMENT: [redacted] B1
[redacted] SKOL